UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22216
13 February 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 678 (1990), I wish, on behalf of my Government, to submit the following report on actions undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of that resolution up to 7 February 1991, further to our report submitted on 30 January.

Since that report, the military forces of the coalition, including United States military forces, acting in accordance with resolution 678 (1990), have continued their air action against Iraq's military targets. Over 52,000 coalition air sorties have been carried out since hostilities began on 16 January. These sorties were not flown against any civilian or religious targets or against the Iraqi civilian population. Coalition forces have taken every precaution to minimize collateral damage to civilian facilities. Despite the destructive potential of modern warfare, collateral damage has been extremely limited.

In the third week of hostilities aimed at the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the commander of the forces in the Gulf gave the following explanation of our objectives in the war. The first phase of allied attacks targeted command and control, air defence, combat aircraft in the air and on the ground, nuclear, biological and chemical storage facilities, and the Republican Guards.

Once the first phase was completed, coalition forces were to target air defence radars and missiles in Kuwait to achieve undisputed control of the air and to target the supply lines leading from Iraq into Kuwait. The third phase, in which we are now involved, includes extensive attacks on the Republican Guard and other ground troops in the Kuwaiti theater of operations. Despite a decrease in the priority given to most other targets in Iraq, surface-to-surface missile capabilities remain as high priority targets.

On 29 and 30 January, Iraqi forces supported by tanks and artillery invaded Saudi Arabia at four points. Coalition forces counter-attacked and, after heavy fighting, forced the Iraqi forces to withdraw after suffering heavy losses.

As of 7 February, United States forces have lost 16 aircraft in combat action. Other coalition forces have also suffered losses. In addition, 14 United

States military personnel have been killed in action and 27 United States military personnel have been reported as missing in action, 8 of whom have been classified as prisoners of war.

The naval forces of the United States and the allied coalition have continued to engage Iraqi patrol and mine-laying craft in the Northern Arabian Gulf. Fifty-five Iraqi vessels have been confirmed to have been sunk or disabled since the opening of hostilities.

As of 7 February, Iraq has fired 57 surface-to-surface missiles - 29 at Saudi Arabia and 28 at Israel. However, the efforts of the coalition air forces, coupled with the success of the Patriot air defence system, have been effective in bringing about a dramatic decrease in the number of such missile attacks.

United States forces are currently holding 44 members of the Iraqi armed forces. One hundred and eighty-six Iraqi prisoners of war, who had been visited and registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in accordance with the Third Genva Convention Relative to the Protection of Prisoners of War, have been transferred to the Saudi authorities to be housed appropriately. More than 500 Iraqi soldiers have been captured by other members of the allied coalition, largely as a result of the Iraqi attack on Khafji. The coalition forces are granting ICRC timely access to all Iraqi prisoners of war.

Iraqi authorities have continued to ignore the standards of the Geneva conventions in blatant disregard for international law. They have denied access to coalition prisoners of war by ICRC, deliberately exposed them to combat danger, and otherwise abused them for propaganda purposes. They have targeted civilian areas for attack by surface-to-surface missiles, and have deliberately caused serious damage to the natural environment of the region. They have also continued to disregard their obligations towards the population of occupied Kuwait.

Iraqi aircraft continue to fly to airfields in Iran. As of 7 February over 130 Iraqi aircraft are in Iran. The Government of Iran has given clear assurances that it will detain these aircraft until the conclusion of the current conflict.

We are pleased to be able to report that the flow of oil caused by Iraqi forces from the facilities at al-Ahmadi in Kuwait has been halted (at least temporarily). We continue to monitor other oil facilities that may be leaking into the waters of the Gulf and will take action if necessary to prevent further such damage to the region.

The United States has sent a supplemental advisory team to Saudi Arabia to help coordinate efforts to counteract the massive oil slick caused by the Iraqi forces. A key priority has been to protect desalinization and industrial plants that may be disrupted by the oil. The weather has been cooperative, allowing protective booms to be placed around these sites. The grave damage to the environment by this act has yet to be fully evaluated.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING